

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 182460
ORIGIN SS-25

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 182460

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SY, LE, IS, JO, EG, UK, IT, FR, SA, KU, MILI

SUBJECT: LEBANON: SYRIAN INTENTIONS

REF: BEIRUT 4041 (NOTAL)

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1. WE WERE STRUCK HERE BY HOW FIRMLY SARKIS MADE THE POINT
TO YOU THAT THE SYRIANS WOULD COOPERATE WITH HIM AND HAD
NO WISH FOR A MAJOR CONFRONTATION, BUT THAT THE REAL
PROBLEM WAS THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA AND THEIR FEISTINESS.
ARE BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS CONFIDENT THAT THE SYRIANS WILL
IN FACT REMAIN RESTRAINED, EXCEPT POSSIBLY IN THE FACE
OF MAJOR MILITARY CHALLENGES. HAS INTERNATIONAL OPINION

HAD A SUFFICIENT IMPACT TO ASSURE THAT THE SYRIANS WILL NOT GO ALL OUT AT SOME POINT TO DEAL WITH THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS MILITARILY?

2. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT--HERE AS WELL AS IN THE FIELD-- THAT WE ARE REASONABLY CONFIDENT ABOUT SYRIAN INTENTIONS. AMONG OTHER REASONS, THE AMERICAN LEBANESE LEAGUE (ALL) HAS MOUNTED A MAJOR CAMPAIGN TO BRING ABOUT AN IMMEDIATE SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON AND ALL'S CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE BOB BASIL HAS BEEN IN ALMOST DAILY TOUCH WITH SENIOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS, WITH THE PRESS, ETC., AND WILL BE SEEING THE VICE PRESIDENT LATER THIS WEEK.

3. WE HAVE BEEN PUSHING HIM HARD TO GET THE WORD TO HIS CHRISTIAN CONTACTS IN LEBANON TO URGE MAXIMUM RESTRAINT AND AN END OF PROVOCATIONS OF THE SYRIANS. CONSISTENT WITH THE REMARKS OF SARKIS, WE COULD MAKE OUR POINTS EVEN MORE FIRMLY AS LONG AS WE ARE REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT THE SARKIS READING OF SYRIAN INTENTIONS IS BASICALLY CORRECT.

4. IS IT POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT SARKIS AND BOUTROS HAVE BEEN DOWNPLAYING SYRIAN INTENTIONS SO AS TO FORESTALL THE U.S. FROM MAKING NEW REPRESENTATIONS TO SYRIA THAT MIGHT BE REGARDED BY SYRIANS, AS IN JULY 1 DEMARCHE, AS HAVING BEEN STIMULATED BY LEBANESE LEADERSHIP?

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5. PLEASE COMMENT ASAP. CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

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